

## ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A method and apparatus for forwarding requests in a cache hierarchy based on user-defined forwarding rules are described. A proxy cache on a network provides a user interface that enables a user to define a set of

- 5 forwarding rules for controlling the forwarding of content requests within a cache hierarchy. When the proxy cache receives a content request from a client and the request produces a cache miss, the proxy cache examines the rules sequentially two determine whether any of the user-defined rules applies to the request. If a rule is found to apply, the proxy cache identifies one or more
- 10 forwarding destinations from the rule and determines the availability of the destinations. The proxy cache then forwards the request to an available destination according to the applicable rule.